

CoNECTR NEWSLETTER

Colorado Nicotine E-Cigarettes and Tobacco Research Alliance

Issue: December 2025

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Greetings from CoNECTR Director

We're excited to share our final newsletter of 2025. This year has seen more data on the rise of nicotine pouches (check out our featured content on sales data and a recent Cochrane review) and big changes in the tobacco focused units of our federal public health agencies. On the cessation front, after nearly 20 years without a new medication to offer individuals interested in quitting, a potential new cessation medication—cytisinicline (aka cytisine)—has been submitted to the FDA (it's already a WHO Essential Medicine, awaiting its U.S. debut).

Closer to home, Denver voters joined over 400 U.S. municipalities banning flavored tobacco products.

November also brought the [Great American Smokeout](#)! This annual intervention event by the American Cancer Society aims to help those who use tobacco to start their smoke-free journey. We want to recognize the efforts of the **Rocky Mountain Regional VA** team to bring awareness to tobacco and its health effects and their available treatment services, and also to express our thanks for letting us grab a photo in front of the inflatable lungs.

Let us help disseminate your tobacco and nicotine science. Do you have tobacco or nicotine research that you'd like us to feature? Email it to us at gina.kruse@cuanschutz.edu

Gina Kruse, MD, MS, MPH
Director of [CoNECTR](#)



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CoNECTR Vision and Mission

Vision: To facilitate innovative transdisciplinary research, in partnership with clinical care and public health, to improve health outcomes in all communities by reducing illness and death caused by tobacco and nicotine products.

Mission Statement: To cultivate innovative and impactful tobacco and nicotine research within our community of scientists, spanning disciplines from basic science to clinical and population-based research. We seek to grow a pipeline of scientists and practitioners in partnership with our community. Our work is driven by the needs of all Coloradans, with the overarching goal of reducing the harms of commercial tobacco and nicotine products and improving health across the full spectrum of our population.

Refine Your Research Idea with Feedback from Our Steering Committee

To support our research affiliates, we offer Research-In-Progress (RIP) sessions with the [CoNECTR Steering Committee](#). These sessions provide feedback on research proposals at any stage of development. Our Steering Committee brings together a multidisciplinary team that includes faculty, cessation practitioners, and community advisors from grassroots organizations and local health departments.

Interested in presenting your research idea? Contact gina.kruse@cuanschutz.edu to schedule a session.

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NEWS AND POLICY

Powerful New Tobacco Cessation Drug Added to WHO Essential Medicines List – Cytisine

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)

Megan Manning | September 5, 2025

The World Health Organization (WHO) released the 2025 version of the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML) with a major addition to help people who have been addicted by commercial recreational nicotine products – cytisine.

The Executive Summary of the [Report of the 25th WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines](#) noted:

Section 24.5.2 Medicines for nicotine use disorders

The Expert Committee recommended the inclusion of cytisine (INN cytisinicline) on the core list of the EML for use as an aid to stopping smoking and tobacco use, based on a favourable balance of benefits and harms, in an area of major public health need. The Committee considered that the availability of

different smoking cessation treatments serves to provide valuable options and choice for patients and clinicians, could facilitate market competition, reduce costs and improve access to effective smoking and tobacco cessation treatments for national health systems.

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Monitoring Sales: Nicotine Pouch Trends

CDC foundation

Data Brief | October 2025

The CDC Foundation's *Monitoring Tobacco Product Use* has released the latest **Data Brief on Nicotine Pouch Trends**, offering national insights as well as state-specific data for California, Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island.

Key Findings

- Total monthly nicotine pouch sales increased by 250.8% between January 2023 and August 2025.
- Few nicotine pouches sold in the United States are tobacco-flavored. As of August 2025, mint flavor accounts for 60.5% of sales, followed by other flavors (e.g., fruits, candy, drinks) at 23.6% and flavors marketed as smooth/original at 10.5%.
- In Massachusetts, nicotine pouch sales are dominated by products marketed as smooth/original, which likely contain sweeteners, and by products which provide a cooling sensation and contain sweeteners. In California, which now prohibits the sale of products with a distinguishable cooling sensation, nicotine pouch sales are dominated by products marketed as smooth/original. In states without sales restrictions on flavored nicotine pouches, mint and all other flavors (e.g., fruits, candy, drinks) are the most commonly sold flavors

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CLINICAL CORNER

A Proven Tool to Help You Quit Smoking is Now Available for Free Across Colorado

University of Colorado Cancer Center

by Mark Harden | November 20, 2025

For people who want to quit smoking, nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is a proven way to improve the chances of success. As part of its "Be Strong for Tomorrow" tobacco and vaping cessation program, the University of Colorado Cancer Center is making this form of the therapy available for free across Colorado.

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EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

UPCOMING CPC LECTURE

Defining and Addressing the Needs of Advanced Cancer Survivors

Laura Petrillo, MD

December 10, 2025, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM | Fitzsimons Building, Room E5332



[Laura Petrillo, MD](#) is a palliative care physician-investigator in the Division of Palliative Care and Geriatrics at Massachusetts General Hospital and an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Her research focuses on improving supportive care for advanced cancer survivors in the precision medicine era. Dr. Petrillo is the Co-Chair of the National Lung Cancer Roundtable Survivorship Task Group, the Chair of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine Research Committee, and the Co-Chair of the Harvard Center for Palliative Care Research Committee.

This event is hosted by the Cancer Prevention and Control Program. For more information contact ryan.le@ucdenver.edu

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UPCOMING BHWP WEBINAR

Virtual Reality: Its Role and Potential in Treating Nicotine Dependence

Derek Noland, MPH, CTP

December 18, 2025, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM on Zoom



Virtual reality is an increasingly appealing modality in clinical practices, including as a technique for treating nicotine/tobacco dependence. This webinar will provide an overview of virtual reality for clinical purposes and will examine the existing research on this topic as it pertains to nicotine use, including a review of its potential treatment applications.

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss virtual reality as a method for treating nicotine dependence.
- Review the current landscape and research that has been performed regarding virtual reality in this capacity.
- Consider the potential viability of virtual reality to treat nicotine dependence.

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Review past lectures and newsletters
[Visit CoNECTR Website](#)

Upcoming Conferences

[Academy of Health Annual Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation in Health](#) (December 14-17, 2025, National Harbor, MD)

[The European Conference on Tobacco or Health \(ECToH\)](#) (May 20 - 22, 2026, Milan, Italy)

[Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco](#) (March 4 - 6, 2026, Baltimore, MD)

[American Society of Preventive Oncology](#) (April 12 - 14, 2026, Denver, CO)

[Society of Behavioral Medicine](#) (April 22 – 25, 2026, Chicago, IL)

[American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) (April 23-26, 2026, San Diego, CA)

[American Thoracic Society](#) (May 15 - 16, 2026, Orlando, FL)

[Society for Prevention Research](#) (May 26 -29, 2026 , Washington, DC)

[Thomas L. Petty Aspen Lung Conference](#) (June 9-12, 2026, Aspen, CO)

[Behavior Genetics Association](#) (June 23-26, 2026, Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

[Society for General Internal Medicine](#) (May 6 - 9, 2026, Washington, DC)

[National Conference on Tobacco or Health](#) (June 29 – July 01, 2027, *location not yet announced*)

[Public Health in the Rockies](#) (*2026 dates not yet announced*)

[World Conference on Tobacco Control \(International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease\)](#) (*2026 dates not yet announced*)

[American Public Health Association Annual Meeting](#) (*2026 dates not yet announced*)

[World Conference on Lung Health \(International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease\)](#) (*2026 dates not yet announced*)

Are you attending SRNT 2026 Annual Meeting?

Let us know so we can highlight your work and schedule dinners with your colleagues.

Email gina.kruse@cuanschutz.edu

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

To share the great work around campus we have created a search to identify the new tobacco and nicotine research published by University of Colorado researchers. Please send us additional papers to highlight, it will help us to refine our search.

Jun L, Armon C, Ewing A, Mahnken J, Tedaldi E, Palella F, Novak RM, **Firnhaber C**, Mayer S, Wendrow A, Simoncini G, Battalora L, Buchacz K; HIV Outpatient Study (HOPS) Investigators. “Effect of Prevalent and Incident Comorbidity Diagnoses on Quit Attempts and Prescription of Smoking Cessation Medications, HIV Outpatient Study, 2007-2022.” *Int J Behav Med*. 2025 Oct 29. doi: 10.1007/s12529-025-10399-2. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 41162810. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/41162810/>

Montgomery L, Beaverson S. “Nicotine e-Cigarettes as a Strategy for Smoking Cessation.” *Am Fam Physician*. 2025 Oct;112(4):450-451. PMID: 41118192.
<https://www.aafp.org/pubs/afp/issues/2025/1000/fpin-ci-nicotine-e-cigarettes-smoking-cessation.html>

Khodae A, **Reed A, Khodae M**. “Electronic Cigarette Use (Vaping) Among Adolescents: A Narrative Review of an Emerging Public Health Epidemic.” *Cureus*. 2025 Aug 5;17(8):e89422. doi: 10.7759/cureus.89422. PMID: 40918883; PMCID: PMC12410507.
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12410507/>

Thielking A, Qian Y, Olivier S, Sewpaul R, Levy DE, Ngubane H, **Kruse GR**, Zulu T, Rigotti NA, Siedner MJ, Wong EB, Reddy K. “Changes in tobacco use in rural South Africa during the 2020 tobacco sales ban: an analysis of current and previous behaviours using cross-sectional data.” *Tob Control*. 2025 Sep 5;tc-2025-059357. doi: 10.1136/tc-2025-059357. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40912916.
<https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/early/2025/09/05/tc-2025-059357>

SantaBarbara NJ, St Hilaire MA, Konkle-Parker DJ, Comulada WS, Cantrell J, D'Souza A, Foronjy R, Koletar SL, Mimiaga MJ, Palella FJ Jr, Merenstein D, Rubtsova AA, Raju S, Martinez CA, Hanna DB, Drummond MB, Weber KM, Wang R, **Erlandson KM**. “Physical Activity, Cigarette Smoking, and Depression Among People with HIV.” *AIDS Behav*. 2025 Sep;29(9):2701-2710. doi: 10.1007/s10461-025-04727-6. Epub 2025 Apr 29. PMID: 40299258; PMCID: PMC12351484. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12351484/>

Romero Villela PN, Kelly KM, Balbona JV, Ehringer MA, Keller MC. “Maternal Smoking During Pregnancy Interacts With Genetic Factors to Increase Risk for Low Birth Weight but Not Harmful Offspring Smoking Behaviors in Europeans.” *Nicotine Tob Res*. 2025 Sep 23;27(10):1795-1804. doi: 10.1093/ntr/ntae310. PMID: 39722218; PMCID: PMC12453677.
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12453677/>

Kruse GR, Bertolini A, Gilliam B, Girard H, Huebner-Tores C, Vaillancourt T, Rigotti NA, Aschbrenner KA, **Studts JL**, Martinez S, Yoguez N, Gundersen D, Baggett T. “Collaborative Selection of Implementation Strategies for Improving Smoking Cessation Treatment and Lung Cancer Screening in Federally Qualified Health Centers: A Pilot Study.” *Public Health Rep*. 2025 Jul-Aug;140(4):325-333. doi: 10.1177/00333549251322734. Epub 2025 Jul 8. PMID: 40626383; PMCID: PMC12237989.
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12237989/>

Hoang TT, Cosin-Tomas M, Lee Y, Monasso G, Xu Z, Li SS, Zeng X, **Starling AP**, Reimann B, Röder S, Zillich L, Jima DD, Thio CHL, Pesce G, Kersten ETG, Breeze CE, Burkholder AB, Lee M, Ward JM, Consortium B, Alfano R, Deuschle M, Duijts L, Ghassabian A, Herrera LG, Jaddoe VW, Motsinger-Reif AA, Lie RT, Nawrot TS, Page CM, Send TS, Sharp G, Stein DJ, Streit F, Sunyer J, Wilcox AJ, Zar HJ, Koppelman GH, Annesi-Maesano I, Corpeleijn E, Snieder H, Hoyo C, Hüls A, Sirignano L, Witt SH, Herberth G, Plusquin M, **Dabelea D**, Yeung E, Wiemels JL, Richmond RC, Taylor JA, Felix JF, Håberg SE, Bustamante M, London SJ. “Prenatal Smoking Exposures and Epigenome-wide Methylation in Newborn Blood.” *Environ Health Perspect*. 2025 Jun 6. doi: 10.1289/EHP16303. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40478623.
https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/EHP16303?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori:rid:crossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%20%20pubmed

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Other Publications Worth Noticing

Hartmann-Boyce J, Tattan-Birch H, Brown J, Shahab L, Goniewicz ML, Ma CL, Wu AD, Travis N, Jarman H, Livingstone-Banks J, Lindson N. **Oral nicotine pouches for cessation or reduction of use of other tobacco or nicotine products**. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*. 2025 Oct 24;10(10):CD016220. doi: 10.1002/14651858.CD016220.pub2. PMID: 41130602; PMCID: PMC12549188.

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Reducing Tobacco Use Worldwide — A New Perspective Series

To explore the best ways of addressing tobacco-related global disease burden, the New England Journal of Medicine launched a Perspective series entitled [Reducing Tobacco Use Worldwide](#). The series will critically evaluate strategies for reducing global tobacco consumption, with an emphasis on specific challenges and opportunities in low- and middle-income countries. The topics to be covered align with the World Health Organization's pillars of tobacco cessation, which include behavioral support, pharmacotherapy, digital technology, and health care systems.

[Integrating Pharmacotherapy into Tobacco Control in Low- and Middle-Income Countries — A Critical Need](#)

Rigotti NA, Walker N, Amer Nordin AS | Published September 13, 2025 | N Engl J Med 2025;393:1041-1044 | DOI: 10.1056/NEJMp2500685

[The Contribution of Digital Treatment to Efforts to Reduce Global Tobacco Use](#)

Naughton F, Nadkarni A | Published October 11, 2025 | N Engl J Med 2025;393:1449-1452 | DOI: 10.1056/NEJMp2500683

[Integration of Tobacco-Cessation Interventions into Tuberculosis and HIV Care](#)

Shuter J, Goel S, Himelhoch SS | Published November 15, 2025 | N Engl J Med 2025;393:1969-1972 | DOI: 10.1056/NEJMp2500490

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Improving Health Decision Making with Comparative Clinical Effectiveness Research: Retrospective Observational Studies Leveraging Existing Data Sources

PCORI Funding Announcement; Cycle 1 2026

- PFA Opens: Dec. 2, 2025
- Applicant Town Hall: Dec. 10, 2025, 12 pm (ET)
- Letter of Intent (LOI) Deadline: Jan. 6, 2026; 5 pm (ET)
- LOI Status Notification: Feb. 3, 2026
- Application Deadline: May. 5, 2026; 5 pm (ET)

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Boettcher Foundation Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards

- The Boettcher Foundation Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards Program supports early career investigators whose research aims to find ways to prevent disease and improve human health through basic and applied biomedical research.
- \$250,000 awards are available for up to five CU early career researchers
- A pre-submission webinar will be held On December 12, 2025

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Pivot-RP is a comprehensive funding database available to all CU Anschutz faculty and staff.

- Register for a new account at <https://pivot.proquest.com/register>
- Already have an account? Sign in at <https://pivot.proquest.com/session/login>



Other ways to learn about funding opportunities

- [Funding Focus Newsletter | CU Anschutz](#)
- [Research Grant Process | American Cancer Society](#)
- [Tobacco Regulatory Science Program | NIH](#)
- [Smoking and Tobacco Use | CDC](#)
- [Tobacco education, prevention, and cessation grant program | CDPHE](#)

We want to hear your feedback. Let us know where you present your tobacco/nicotine research, suggest content for future newsletter or activities using the link below.

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